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ABSTRACT

The measurement of institutional effectiveness involves a systematic comparison of organizational purpose and performance. For community colleges, organizational purpose can be defined in terms of providing access to education, realizing student achievement, promoting student development, or addressing social needs. If all four purposes are acknowledged, then measures of effectiveness must be developed for each. At Macomb Community College (MCC), an effort was made to determine the institution's main purposes, select appropriate goals for each purpose, and identify the specific measures which accurately indicate institutional outcomes. The process included a survey of students to determine their definition of a successful college experience; the formation of four study teams to develop lists of outcomes measures for successful transfer, completion of personal goals, employability, community impact, satisfaction indices, and human development; and the selection of five or six goals for each institutional purpose. The resulting statement of MCC's purposes and goals included the following: (1) provide opportunity through equitable access; effective services; social, cultural, and cross-cultural opportunities; student/client goal clarification; and student/client retention; (2) realize student achievement, as measured by completion of the student's goals, academic success, successful transfer, and successful employment; (3) promote student development in terms of learning and human potential; and (4) address societal needs, such as promoting quality of life and well-being, institutional innovation in problem solving, developing the community, and student/client/community satisfaction. Many of the specific measures designated for initial implementation already have data collection in progress. The next step is to establish a routine and a format for annual distribution of this information, and to increase awareness and understanding of the project. A chart illustrating institutional purposes and goals, and related measures, data sources, tracking frequency, and anticipated uses is attached. (JMC)

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Macomb Community College

MEASURING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Fall, 1989

JC 890 455

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PHILOSOPHY

Organizations that serve the public interest have the dual responsibility to "do things right" and to "do the right things." Although evaluative assessments have always been a major tool of organizations in planning and refining their activities, these efforts have traditionally only centered around the assessment of **performance** to improve processes and procedures—to know if things are done right. However, it takes a broader evaluation to determine if the activities undertaken by the organization are the right things to do. This broader evaluation assesses the impact that an organization has on its constituency—whether or not its performance achieves the **purpose** for which it was created. Institutional effectiveness is measured by both performance and achievement of purpose.

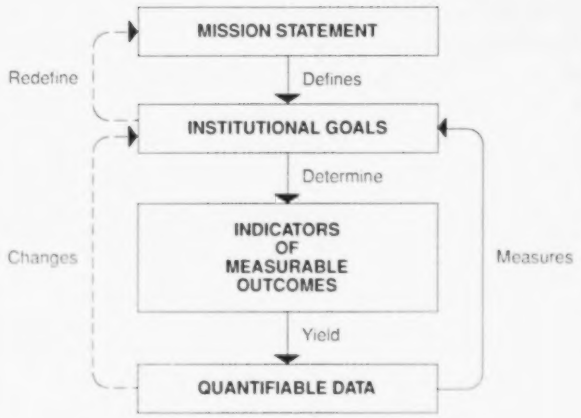
There has been substantial and growing interest over the last few years in the topic of measuring effectiveness of educational institutions, consistent with a general public sentiment for more accountability among public agencies of all types. More than ever, the public is looking to higher education to solve the economic ills of the country and to keep our businesses competitive with foreign enterprises. And they want results. A recent study by the Michigan Department of Education (Project Outreach, 1989) has tracked the growing importance of education in this state. The study found that 88 percent of our citizens say they feel a college education is "very important," up from 74 percent in 1984. This new emphasis on education has brought about public outcry for reform and effectiveness of educational institutions.

In some states, the measurement and documentation of institutional effectiveness has been recently legislated for higher education and tied to funding. In addition, it has also become a basis for accreditation. Even in areas where it has not been mandated, there has still been a great interest in evaluating effectiveness based upon this legislative trend and the recognition of its value, both programmatically and managerially.

The topic of institutional effectiveness is of particular interest to community college leaders as they shift their focus from establishment and growth (as were their concerns through the 1960's and 1970's) to quality and the utilization of resources in their organizations. It is quite natural for them to reflect on the accomplishment of their mission as the institution becomes mature and growth stabilizes.

Measurement of institutional effectiveness has been called "matching performance with purpose." According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, "The assessment of organizational effectiveness essentially involves a systematic, explicit, and documented comparison of organizational performance to organizational purpose." The National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges (NACTC) calls such assessment a linkage between an organization's mission statement, the goals which it implies, and the outcomes. NACTC developed a model to show this linkage.

The Model of Institutional Effectiveness



Source: National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges

As Peter Ewell has pointed out (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1989), a college that is serious about assessment should look at its mission and decide which educational outcomes fit that mission. Too often, the purpose of an educational institution is stated in vague terms in its mission statement. How you define purpose defines which outcomes you measure, that is, how you measure effectiveness.

For community colleges, institutional purpose has been an evolving concept. They were originally established to provide greater access to higher education *opportunities* for those who had traditionally been excluded due to economic factors, ethnicity, race, gender, age, or even mobility. However, community colleges are now created and supported not only for the purpose of providing access and opportunities to community residents, but to serve their students and communities in other ways as well. Community colleges now play an active role in helping individual students to realize their own educational goals and to maximize the development of their talents and skills. They are also instrumental in the development of communities and in solving the greater societal problems that their communities face.

Providing opportunity is usually stressed in the establishment and growth stages of a community college. A new institution must emphasize delivery of their courses and services. If purpose is framed in terms of "opportunity," then effectiveness will be measured in terms of input factors, such as the number of students admitted and enrolled or the number of sections offered.

Traditionally, selective colleges and universities have viewed their effectiveness as student academic *achievement* as portrayed by test scores or academic honors. As noted by Alexander Astin, this is typically viewed without regard to prior academic preparation. For community colleges, the focus of achievement is relative to the completion of students' educational goals. If purpose is stated in terms of "achievement," then effectiveness would be measured in terms of outcomes such as course and program completions, the number of degrees granted, or a comparison of student status to student intent.

A third alternative is to define purpose in terms of *human development*. It is the change which occurs in the individual as a result of having been involved in the learning process. Community colleges tend to actively assist this process with extensive learning support systems. If development is accepted as an institutional purpose, then effectiveness would be measured in terms of improvement, such as increases in knowledge, skills and other intellectual and/or physical capacities.

The fourth approach is to define purpose in terms of "social benefit" or meeting *"societal needs,"* that is, looking to the underlying contributions that the institution is expected to provide to society. If societal needs are selected for the statement of purpose, then effectiveness would be measured by how well those needs are being met by the actions of the institution. It requires that these measurements be made in the context of the perceptions of the community being served.

When an organization enters the "maturity" stage—the stage where excellence rather than growth is used as the yardstick—greater interest is given to the achievement, development and societal needs aspects of their purpose. It is safe to assume that mature educational institutions probably desire to address all four purposes, although they will seldom be detailed in their mission statements, since mission statements typically outline activities. If all four purposes are acknowledged, then effectiveness measures would be appropriate for each category. The challenge in front of us, then, is to select appropriate goals for each purpose and to identify the specific measures that serve as accurate indicators of the accomplishment of that purpose.

PROCESS

As soon as it was published and distributed in 1988, the Report of the Commission on The Future of Community Colleges aroused a great deal of interest across the nation and at Macomb Community College in particular. Entitled "Building Communities: A Vision for A New Century," it generated thinking about a number of topics essential to the future of our College. Among these was the challenge of assessing the outcomes of the community college experience. The report stated, "We recommend that each community college develop a campus-wide assessment of institutional effectiveness. Such a program should include a periodic re-examination of mission and goals, specific programs, individual student outcomes, retention rates, and the performance of graduates."

At Macomb's invitation, Terry O'Banion came to campus and addressed the members of the College's Manager's Group. Through presentations and informal discussions, we explored the challenges of "Building Communities."

January 1989 Faculty Development Day activities were structured with round table discussions to capture the ideas of faculty and professional staff relative to the topics of the report, including the need and impact of measuring and documenting institutional effectiveness, and related issues such as exiting competency testing and academic support systems.

The College leadership explored alternative measures of success, shifting emphasis from traditional measures to those more appropriate for renewal. These include a shift . . .

from quantity to quality
from efficiency to effectiveness
from inputs to outcomes
from products to customers
from repetition to innovation
from discussion to action

At this point, planning became even more focused on institutional renewal. The key elements of this renewal were identified as mission, leadership, culture/climate, staff development, strategic process, resource reallocation, and qualitative evaluation. The latter is expressed in terms of two visible goals, (1) institutional effectiveness and (2) student success. The College is committed to dealing with these goals over the period of the next year.

Discussions about renewal continued in context of a situational analysis of community colleges and the search for alternative measures of success. Approximately 600 students were surveyed to complete the sentence, "I would consider my experience at Macomb Community College a success if . . ." Responses revealed that students thought of their success in terms of both their educational experience while at Macomb and their future career or transfer success resulting from their work at Macomb.

Four study teams were formed and each was asked to develop a list of 10 measures of the outcomes of institutional effectiveness, along with rationale as to their choices. The results of the study teams' efforts were completed in a wide variety of formats. The assumptions framing their reports included:

"Institutional effectiveness is the process of articulating the mission of the college, setting goals, defining how the goals will be met, and using data from assessment for ongoing goal setting and planning."

"There must be a fundamental shift in college functioning from traditional to student-centered; goals and objectives must be achieved within available resources."

"Because of their unique role in higher education, community colleges must develop standards of excellence reflecting conformity to community needs. Because the College is basically a service organization ... its effectiveness should be judged on whether those services have made a positive difference in our students. As a human development institution, the development

of human talent must be our principal goal. Consequently, effectiveness measures for the college must be 'outcomes' or 'value added' in approach."

With these introductory remarks, a total of 56 items were submitted. At first, these suggested measures appeared to cluster into common areas and a taxonomy of:

Successful Transfer
Completion of Personal Goals
Employability
Community Impact
Satisfaction Indices
Human Development (Cultural/Social, Knowledge/Skill, and Intellectual)

But not all measures fit into these categories, nor did they portray the varying importance of different measures. Other taxonomies were also explored, including those based upon audience (students, employers, community); relationship to the institution (institutional outcomes, external outcomes, and student outcomes); and institutional purpose.

The approach of viewing effectiveness in context of institutional purpose was well documented in the literature, and presented a logical and practical framework. The appropriate type of measure could then be determined based upon the purpose, before the task of identifying the specific effectiveness measurements was undertaken.

STATED PURPOSE	TYPE OF MEASURE
Provide "Opportunity"	Input factors/Quantitative
Realize "Achievement"	Outcome Factors/Qualitative
Promote "Development"	Positive Change/Improvements
Address "Societal Needs"	Meeting Demands/Goals/Plans

Goals that were identified for each institutional purpose were submitted by each study team and compiled to form an institutional list of fifteen goals. Representatives from each study team were asked to narrow the list to a manageable five or six goals for initial implementation of measurement, and to identify the specific measures to be collected, documented and tracked over time. The specific measures were chosen based upon their face validity, practicality of collection, and utility of the data.

The communication of the results of this process begins with this document, to be followed by the collection, reporting and distribution of identified measures. The full use of the data for continuous improvement is still a challenge in front us.

PRODUCT

Throughout this process, a great deal of introspection and clarification occurred. The results include a renewed commitment to assessment of institutional effectiveness, a set of goals identified by purpose, a specific list of initial measures to be tracked and documented, and a dedication to the use of the data for institutional improvement.

The renewed commitment is articulated in a Directional Goal statement as adopted by the College. This Statement clarifies the College's intent as it begins to assess institutional effectiveness. It also provides the parameters for action while allowing for flexibility in the implementation.

Directional Goal:
Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness

Macomb Community College will undertake assessment of institutional effectiveness as part of the planning and renewal process. This assessment will compare performance with our evolving purpose, including (1) providing higher education opportunities, (2) realizing academic achievement, (3) promoting human development, and (4) addressing societal needs. We commit to the systematic and ongoing measurement of relevant indicators and to the use of resulting information for continuous improvement.

Within this general direction, the following goals are identified as those most important to the achievement of our purposes:

Provide "Opportunity"
- Equitable Access
- Effective Services
- Social, Cultural and Cross Cultural Opportunities
- Student/Client Goal Clarification
- Student/Client Retention

Realize "Achievement"
- Student/Client Goal Completion
- Student/Client Academic Success
- Successful Transfer
- Successful Employment

Promote "Development"
- Student/Client Learning
- Development of Human Potential

Address "Societal Needs"
- Quality of Life and Well-Being
- Institutional Innovation in Problem Solving
- Development of Community
- Student/Client/Community Satisfaction

Many of the specific measures designated for initial implementation already have data collection in progress. They are presented here with their sources and recommended frequency of reporting. While most of the measurements are under way for degree-credit programs, it will be necessary to expand the data collection to include non-credit students, those in Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) and the Center for Human Resource Development (CHRD).

In addition to data collection and information distribution, the institutional commitment includes the use of effectiveness measures for continuous institutional improvement. The list of anticipated uses provides examples. It is expected that further uses can be identified and implemented by various departments throughout the College.

With the initial specific measures now identified, the next step in implementing the measurement of institutional effectiveness is to establish a routine and format for annual distribution of this information. More critical, however, is meeting the continuing challenge of increasing awareness and understanding of this project and achieving its potential for institutional improvement.

MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEASURES OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS RELATING TO PURPOSE

INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE & GOALS	MEASURES	DATA SOURCE	TRACKING FREQUENCY	ANTICIPATED USES
■ **PROVIDE "OPPORTUNITY"**				
Equitable Access	**Enrollment Headcount**	MCC Data-base,IPEDS, h.s. feeder rpts	Annual	Market segmentation Target recruitment activities Estimate program vitality
Effective Services	**Student Satisfaction**	ACT Student Satisfaction Survey; PROE	Every 2 years	Match services with use and demand levels Determine staffing and operation needs Revise service offerings Co-curricular program development Reallocation of resources
Effective Learning Support	**Course Completion Rate**	Grade Dist Reports	Semester	Direct focus of academic alert system Prescription for short-term interventions Curriculum revisions Guide for course and program advising
■ **REALIZE "ACHIEVEMENT"**				
Successful Transfer Successful Employment Personal Interest	**Comparison of Student Status to Student Intent**	Registration Data; MiSIS; Follow-up Studies*	Annual	Articulation Curriculum development Program and course development, revisions, and deletions Review of use of non-credit options
■ **PROMOTE "DEVELOPMENT"**				
Student/Client Learning	**Learning Outcomes**	CAAP*	Every 2 years	Identify skills being taught Identify topics for faculty development/ in-services Experimentation of teaching methods Reputation development Communication of identifiable results to the community Legislative correspondence to influence possible state mandates for outcomes NCA Accreditation
■ **ADDRESS "SOCIETAL NEEDS"**				
Client/Community Satisfaction	**Employer/ Community Satisfaction**	MiSIS/PROE/ PREP, Telephone Surveys*	Annual	Strategic planning Curriculum development Changes in programs Reallocation of resources Reputation enhancement

*Not currently fully in place

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